

Frettenham Primary School
Hainford Primary School
Horsford Primary School
Old Catton Junior School
White Woman Lane School
St. Faiths' Primary School



Nebula
where stars are born

Ashley Best-White
Executive Headteacher

26 February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers


I hope this finds you all safe and well and I trust you had a happy half term 'break'. I know for many of you the break from home learning will have been very welcome but for others it would have meant less structure to the day and less contact with others so could have been difficult. I hope the warmer weather and longer hours of daylight not only lift our spirits but also give us hope that as spring and summer are fast approaching, so is the prospect of being able to see our friends and family again.

All Children Return to School – Monday 8 March 2021

In light of the announcement by the Prime Minister about the reopening of schools to all pupils from 8th March, I wanted to let you know that we are well underway with our plans to welcome the children back to our schools. Like many announcements over the last year, this will bring a mix of emotions. I know that, for many of you, getting your children back to school, seeing their friends and playing and learning together again, this announcement will be a cause of much relief but for others I understand it may be a cause of some anxiety.

PREPARING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THE RETURN TO SCHOOL
#LOCKDOWN 2021


WELLBEING



Parents and their children may be anxious about the return to school.

- As a parent try to not project your fears onto your young person.
- Children learn to manage their emotions via co-regulation. Model the response you wish your child to have.
- Allow your child the opportunity to discuss their fears and concerns. Work on solutions and strategies together.
- Involve your child in preparation the night before school starts laying out uniform, packing bag. Promote a positive mindset.
- We have a free activity pack to support young people at www.thecontentedchild.co.uk.

ROUTINES



Many young people will be out of the school routine. In order to support a smooth transition back to school, we should consider

- bedtimes and waking time. If necessary work towards this gradually over the next 14 days.
- mealtimes, to fit in with the school timetable, snack and lunchtime. Stop excess snacking between meal times.
- Keep to school timings for home learning, particularly in final week.
- Ensure child is supported to manage timetable and equipment, ensure organisation day before to save anxieties on the morning.
- Take the walk/journey to school once or twice in the week before.

The Contented Child - Find us on Facebook

We have worked through the updated guidance from the Department for Education to review and update our risk assessments to plan how once again we will support the children to come back to school in a safe and positive way. We have all the safety measures in place and our top priority, as always is everyone's safety.

Please be reassured that your child's safety and well-being is at the heart of everything we do.

If you and your child are feeling nervous, please let us know. After an extended period without the routine of school, the suggestions above may help you.

Our schools will re-open with the safety measures and procedures that you will be very familiar with from the autumn term. Our collective efforts to reduce community transmission of the coronavirus has had a positive impact and we must continue to be vigilant to ensure this continues.

As you will know, the schools in our federation are very different and each has a specific plan that works in their particular context. Therefore, each Head of School will write to you separately to ensure you have the specific information you will need about your school, for you and your child to return to school on 8th March.

I know this time has been tough for everyone. So many parents have done an amazing job of 'home schooling' and our critical worker parents have continued to keep our country going under such difficult circumstances. Just a few more days to go to keep your children focused on the remote learning until they come back to school ... they can then return to school as up to date as possible.

When school reopens, we will focus on reconnecting the children with our expectations, values and learning behaviours as well as reviewing their learning so that teachers know how they can best support all the children in the future. As always, we will focus on the mental and physical wellbeing and social connection of our children. Some media coverage at the moment really isn't helping; with the constant talk about 'catch up' and children falling behind. We all know that learning at home has brought a huge range of pressures for many families and the idea that anyone is letting their children down is so unhelpful.

When children returned after the last lockdown, they were clearly pleased to be back with their friends and seeing their joyful faces was something that kept us going in the darkest of times. We will want to see those smiles back on their faces and we are looking forward to re-engaging with them both personally and educationally. My own view is that children are remarkably resilient in times like this. I have little time for the media hype around 'a lost generation of school children' who will never catch up. I am genuinely far more concerned in the short-term with putting the smile back on their faces than I am about offering intense additional tuition and unwarranted pressure.

What most people really want right now is human contact, to laugh, chat, and be carefree with people they love and care about. Talk of extra lessons, longer school days and holiday learning can feel like a huge additional pressure. When we have everyone back at school, we will plan to support them in the best way we can but our feeling is that when newer, safer freedoms come, children should spend time with friends and family, playing and getting to know each other again. It is vital we support their learning, and we will, but this will come when they are ready.

Eight more reasons to be reassured ...

1. We are returning to what we know

Schools are places of routine and structure - even if these routines have had to change, the predictability of the school day will be hugely reassuring for many.

2. Teachers are trained to respond to what is in front of them

There is no such thing as 'normal' when it comes to learning. All learners are individual and teachers respond to where the young person is, not where anyone says they should be.

3. 'Learning' (in this context) is a verb, not a noun

This means that we can't lose learning as if it's a tangible thing. Some learning just hasn't taken place yet. Young people will take the lead from us, so if we don't talk of 'catching up', they won't feel they need to.

4. Equally, learning is a process, not a product

We can't buy 'learning' and we can't give 'learning'. Learners have to be ready to learn and this relies on relationships and wellbeing.

5. Teachers are 'allopARENTS' (Alloparenting, defined as care provided by individuals other than parents)

Some children will be naturally worried about returning to school, but when staff build trust first and foremost, learning will naturally follow.

6. Intrinsic motivation comes into play

In New Zealand, during the Christchurch earthquakes, young people missed huge amounts of school, however results did not suffer. Young people knew what they needed to do to succeed.

7. It's back to school, not back to learning

As adults, we can look back and see that school was one place where we learned, but not the only place. Some children will have learned huge amounts during this time, just in unexpected ways.

8. We don't know what we don't know

We can only speculate what the impact of the pandemic will be on young people. Yes, unfortunately for some it will have taken a great toll, but for others they will have built their character in ways we didn't know possible – resilience, creativity, self-sufficiency are all words we have heard a lot from parents and young people in the last year.

This is not a "lost generation" of children but an incredibly special one who deserve all we can give them once we are back together as a school. I have every confidence in our staff who I know will, once again, go above and beyond to help each and every one of them to be the very best they can be.

If you have any questions, please email your child's school using the office@ email address and someone will be happy to help.

I hope that you, your family and loved ones keep safe and well.

A. D. Best-White

Ashley Best-White
Executive Headteacher
The Nebula Federation

